

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 00976 171353Z
ACTION CU-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 USIA-15 L-03 /040 W
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R 170632Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6918

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0976

PLEASE PASS AID/W FOR DSB/IT AND USIA/INA

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: OEXC, EAID, SY
SUBJ: SYRIAN PROPOSAL AND US COUNTERPROPOSAL UNDER CULTURAL
AGREEMENT

REF: A) 77 STATE 30884; B) STATE 308839

1. FOLLOWING IS STATUS REPORT OF POST ACTIONS TO ARRIVE AT
AGREED-UPON SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES FOR 1978 AND 1979 UNDER
BILATERAL CULTURAL AGREEMENT.

2. FOLLOWING RECEIPT FREFTLS MISSION OFFICERS CALLED ON
OFFICIALS OF MINPLAN AND SECURED THEIR AGREEMENT THAT THEY
WOULD REQUEST INCREASE IN PARTICIPANT TRAINING GRANT (004)
IF NECESSARY TO ACCOMMODATE USAID FINANCED ACTIVITIES
UNDER PROPOSED SCHEDULE. MINPLAN AGREED INFORMALLY TO THIS
PROCEDURE AND UNDERSTANDS THAT ANY SUCH INCREASE WILL COME OUT
OF OVER ALL USAID ALLOCATIONS FOR FY 78 AND 79. SINCE BOTH
MINPLAN AND POST HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT SYRIAN ABILITY
TO PRODUCE FULL NUMBER OF QUALIFIED CANDIDATES AND BECAUSE
ALL FY 77 FUNDS FULLY PROGRAMMED AND ADDITIONAL MONEY
NEEDED FOR REGULAR ONGOING AID
PARTICIPANT TRAINING PROGRAM. IT WAS DECIDED TO REQUEST
AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH SIGNING OF FY 1978
GENERAL PARTICIPANT TRAINING AMENDMENT AT PREVIOUSLY
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PROGRAMMED FIGURE OF \$850,00 WHICH COULD INCLUDE ABOUT
\$125,000 FOR MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION,
CULTURE AND INFORMATION BASED ON PREVIOUS YEAR'S AVERAGE
FOR TRAINING NEEDS FROM THOSE MINISTRIES. THIS CAN BE
AMENDED TO INCREASE FUNDING LEVEL IF NECESSARY (SEE
DAMASCUS 604)

3. USIS PREPARED REPP#DIPLOMATIC NOTE CONTAINING OUR

COUNTERPROPOSAL TO SYRIAN DRAFT. THIS INCLUDED ALL PROPOSALS REF B AND A SECTION DETAILING FUNDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CU PORTION OF SCHEDULE. IN THIS COUNTERPROPOSAL, SCHEDULES I AND II HAVE BEEN REVERSED TO GIVE GREATER PROMINENCE TO CULTURAL ACTIVITIES. NOTE STATED THAT COUNTERPROPOSAL WAS FOR PURPOSES OF DISCUSSION ONLY AND DID NOT HAVE FINAL USG APPROVAL. COPIES HAVE BEEN POUCHED TO USAID-TEIL, CU/NEA-BERG, NEA/ARN-MONROE AND USIA/INA-KEITH. WE BELIEVE FINANCIAL ESTIMATES CONTAINED REF B REPRESENT REASONABLE WORKING FIGURES FOR BOTH SCHEDULES WITH EXCEPTION PARA. 17 WHICH SEEMS HIGH. THIS WILL BE DEVELOPED FURTHER IN LATER DISCUSSIONS.

4. NOTE AND COUNTERPROPOSAL, CAREFULLY TRANSLATED INTO ARABIC, WERE TAKEN INFORMALLY BY PAO AND CAO TO DEPMIN CULTURE LUJAMI AND MFA DIRECTOR OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS ZIFA TO OBTAIN THEIR PERSONAL REACTIONS TO TONE AND APPROACH BEFORE BEING OFFICIALLY TRANSMITTED FEB 13. ARABIC TEXT EXAMINED BY BOTH OFFICIALS AND ENGLISH BY THIRD WHOM ZIFA SUMMONED. ALL THREE DECLARED THEMSELVES VERY PLEASE WITH LANGUAGE QUALITY, CONTENT AND OUR EVIDENT ATTEMPT RESPOND TO SARG'S PREFERRED PROGRAM EMPHASES. COPIES HAVE BEEN SENT TO ALL INTERESTED OFFICER IN SARG.
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5. NEXT STEP AS WE SEE IT WILL BE NEGOTIATING SESSION(S) WITH MINS HIGHER EDUCATION AND PLAN ON BASIS OUR COUNTER-PROPOSAL. WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED.
MURPHY

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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